

Tip Sheet for Providing Comments

Public involvement is an important part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. For helpful guidance on effectively participating in NEPA, please see the Council on Environmental Quality's publication, "A Citizen's Guide to the National Environmental Policy Act" (2021), available online: https://ceq.doe.gov/get-involved/citizens_guide_to_nepa.html. Some general recommendations for staying involved in the NEPA process for any project include asking to be added to project mailing lists to receive notification of public meetings and project information; reviewing project or agency websites for updates; understanding the federal agency (or agencies) roles in the NEPA process; attending public meetings; and learning about the NEPA process including when and how to comment.

Effective Commenting

Although the Forest Service considers all comments, providing meaningful and effective comments can help agencies refine their environmental analyses and better inform the decision-making process. To that end, here are just a few tips to consider when providing comments during the NEPA process.

- Consider whether your comments are relevant to the agency's stated purpose and need for the project, and whether they fall within the topic(s) under agency review. For example, comments on Forest-wide prohibition on summer motorized trail use submitted as part of a local snowmobile trail relocation project would likely be reviewed but dismissed by the agency as a comment that is outside the scope of the proposed action.
- Be as specific as possible and support your statements with examples and references, as appropriate. For example, if your comment states that an action will have "unacceptable environmental effects," providing further explanation of the relevant causes of those effects will help the agency refine its analysis.
- Reference page numbers and paragraphs in the document on which you're commenting whenever possible, to help draw the agency's attention to your specific concerns.
- Remember that commenting is not a form of voting or a referendum on a project or alternative. The relative number of comments for or against a project does not affect whether or not a proposed project will move forward.
- Submit comments if you find errors, have new information, or have a different way to meet the agency's goals that may affect the outcome of the environmental analysis.